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361 between these two Sides. Close to this now stands the Roman Catholic Mission, and separating this beach from Kowu is a sandy spit now called [797] by the white men Point Vidil, after the Mission founder, who died on the island on Easter Eve 1898.[1]

BRIEF NOTE ON EVERYDAY LIFE

512 If in the cool season, we may now rest awhile on any one of these beaches, watching the still splendour of the tropic noon or, at low tide, minute blue fishes swimming in the pools. Small girls, perhaps, will pass looking for shellfish on the reef, or an occasional old woman seat herself beneath a shady tree on the shore side to plait.

During most seasons of the year it would be possible during the middle of the day to walk from one end of the island to the other without seeing a soul, save, maybe, for old women too feeble to work, old men who, after a recent performance of the Maki rite, have taken vows to stay at home, together with their wives who now must feed them since they are too holy to touch their own food, small children, or a young man sick with yaws. Everyone else is busy on the mainland, and the Small Island is empty of human life.

But, if we wait till the late afternoon, a very different scene meets our eyes. Now, one by one, canoes laden with produce put out from the mainland creeks, each making for its own landing-place on Vao. Bananas, yams, green "native cabbage," mangoes, mammy apples, perhaps a flying fox, fish caught in traps (there is no hook-and-line fishing), parcels of sundry foods tied up in green leaves, all are unloaded amidst laughter and a general sense of well-being after a cheerful day. Canoes are dragged ashore. Children and young boys bathe, shouting and slapping the water to keep off stray sharks. The women carry the produce homeward. The men see to the gear. Parties enquire from one another how the day has fared. And so, with endless delays, gradually the beaches empty and the villages become alive.

House-enclosures.

342 592 Within the village[2] each married man possesses an enclosure, fenced round with stones usually surmounted by a high screen of interwoven

[1] Père Vidil died from eating a dish of crayfish that had gone bad. His death was wrongly attributed to the malignity of the Vao folk, who were accused of having poisoned the crayfish. Mgr. Doucere hotly denies this imputation (see Douceré, pp. 202 ff.).

[2] This paragraph is based on my knowledge of conditions on Atchin, where I made detailed records of the arrangements inside the house-enclosures which I did not repeat on Vao. A much fuller description, together with native terms, will be given in a later volume. So far as I know, the conditions described here do not differ greatly from those on Vao, though the organisation into Lodges given in the following paragraph differs considerably from that on the remaining Small Islands.

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reeds. The village paths, or streets, are thus lined on both sides with high fences pierced at intervals by entrances left solid at the bottom, both to keep out stray pigs and to keep in those belonging to the owner of the enclosure. The upper part of each entrance is usually open when the owner is at home, but can be blocked, when he so wishes, by a movable reed panel. No man ever enters the enclosure of another without invitation. Indeed, the general communism and publicity of life is counterbalanced by a very great sense of possessiveness about a man's actual home. There are, it is true, certain occasions when even this private spot may be rudely violated, but these are ritual occasions which in a description of everyday life may be left out of account. Within the enclosure are two courts. Firstly an outer court, containing the wife's house,[1] or, if there is more than one wife, a house for each. Here also live, in the same house with their mother, unmarried daughters as well as sons till these are able to dispense with her help. It is into this court that the entrance from the village street gives access. Behind this, partly separated from it except in the case of the very newly wed by another reed screen, is the inner court where is the husband's own house. With him live sometimes a young son or two, but these are usually provided for by the erection of a communal bachelors' house shared by closely related boys and unmarried youths, who may also have friends from other less closely related families to live with them. Both outer and inner court also contain storehouses for yams and yet other houses for the pigs, but valuable tuskers are always kept by the husband in the inner court. Cohabitation occurs only in the wife's house, never in the man's, for fear of pollution by menstrual blood, and never during the woman's menstrual period. There is a tendency, though it is by no means a set rule, for a rich man to gather his married sons around him in a larger compound composed of a number of enclosures with inner and outer court such as have just been described, and it is in these compounds that the bachelors' houses are built.

Lodges.

Besides dwelling-houses, each Vao village possesses a number of lodges,[2] or what in current anthropological literature are called club-houses, which in Vao are called *na-tamp̄*, in which the males of certain sections of the clan congregate and sometimes sleep. These are quite different from the *ghamal*, which belongs to the whole village, and are from one point of view the mortuary chapels of the family or group of families to which they belong. Each lodge is surrounded by a stone wall

[1] Houses are so constructed that the thatched roof reaches the ground on either side. For details of construction see construction of *ghamal*, p. 440. Ordinary dwelling-houses are similarly constructed but on a smaller scale.

[2] See p. 63.